

Hymns: 89 Were You There? 13 In the Garden 91 Crown Him with Many Crowns  
90 Low in The Grave He Lay 92 Jesus Christ Is Risen Today!

Scripture: Psalm 16:7-11

An eyewitness is a key figure in any courtroom. The Bible has many witnesses, but few compare with the one we'll consider first today. She mysteriously pops up in scripture, witnesses some of the most **significant events in history**, and after giving her testimony, just as mysteriously **vanishes from the scene**.

We're going to revisit not only what she saw but also consider how she must have felt as **her heart leaps up from the pages of scripture and strikes a chord** with anyone who considers the account of these momentous events. In the process, we'll see one of the most **tender moments** in all the Bible.

What do we know about her?

- Her name appears in all four Gospels.
- More references to her occur in the Bible than to any Mary except the mother of Jesus.
- Jesus cast seven demons from her (Luke 8:2).
- She followed Jesus as He preached in Galilee (Luke 8:1).
- She supported Jesus financially (Mark 15:40-41; Luke 8:2,3).
- She was one of the women who watched the crucifixion from afar (Matthew 27:55-56; Mark 15:40).
- She stood at the foot of the cross along with Jesus' mother just before He died (John 19:25).
- She attended the burial of Jesus (Matthew 27:61).
- She witnessed that the stone that sealed His tomb had been rolled away (Matthew 28:2).
- She was first to see and speak with the risen Lord (John 20:1,16).
- She heard from the angel who announced that Jesus had risen from the dead (Matthew 28:6).
- She went to tell the disciples (Matthew 28:8).
- And on the way she was met again by Jesus (Matthew 28:9).

There are still many basic things that we don't know about this woman:

- Her age (Jesus' age, younger, that of his mother, that of a grandmother).
- Her lineage – who were her parents?
- Her financial status.
- Her occupation.
- Her social status.
- Or even when she died.

Which Mary is this? What is her name?

It's Mary Magdalene – *Magdalene* indicates that she came from the town Magdala on the west bank of the Sea of Galilee.

We'll launch into our story from the account in Luke chapter 8.

*[1] And it came to pass afterward, that **he** [Jesus] went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,  
[2] And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, **Mary called Magdalene**, out of whom went seven devils,*

*[3] And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, **which ministered unto him of their substance.***

Jesus saved Mary Magdalene from **spiritual bondage**. How **joyful** the moment must have been for her when she was delivered from demonic possession. She responded to His love, it says, with practical devotion to Him. Jesus is still in the business of freeing souls from spiritual bondage if they only turn to Him in faith.

We now move from **great joy** to **the depths of sorrow**. Where do we find Mary Magdalene mentioned next? At the crucifixion of her Lord and Savior.

Matthew 27 (also Mark 15:40; John 19:45)

*[35] And they crucified him...,*

*[50] Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.*

*[55] And many women were there **beholding afar off**, which followed Jesus **from Galilee, ministering unto him:***

*[56] Among which was **Mary Magdalene**, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.*

*[57] When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:*

*[58] He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.*

*[59] And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,*

*[60] And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.*

Mark 15 tells it this way:

*[47] And **Mary Magdalene** and Mary the mother of Joses **beheld where he was laid.***

Picking up the story we switch to:

John 20

*[1] The first day of the week cometh **Mary Magdalene** early, **when it was yet dark**, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.*

*[2] Then **she runneth**, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, **They have taken away the Lord** out of the sepulchre, and **we know not where they have laid him.***

After Peter and John verified Mary's story, we skip down to verse ten and read:

*[10] Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.*

*[11] But Mary stood without at the sepulchre **weeping**: and as she **wept**, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,*

*[12] And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.*

*[13] And they say unto her, Woman, why **weepest** thou? She saith unto them, Because **they have taken away my Lord**, and **I know not where they have laid him.***

Mary's great sorrow multiplies. Notice these four verses contain three references to a form of the word *weep*. Notice she also testifies that Jesus Christ is her Lord. Note too the repeated words of Mary in verses 2 and 13. Clearly, she like virtually every other follower of the Lord, could not even consider the thought that Jesus had risen from the dead as He had repeatedly told them he would do. Even the Pharisees knew Jesus had claimed He would rise the third day. That was their motivation for sealing the tomb and placing a guard there (Matthew 27:62-66).

*[14] And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.*

*[15] Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why **weepest** thou?*

Notice that here Jesus just repeated **the exact question** posed to her by the two angels in verse 13.

This indeed was a very sad moment for Mary. We can only imagine her tears of grief. Her Lord had been **unjustly beaten and killed**, and now **his body had been stolen**.

*whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the **gardener**, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.*

*[16] Jesus saith unto her, **Mary**. She turned herself, and saith unto him, **Rabboni**; which is to say, Master.*

Here was the moment of unimaginable joy. Just a minute before, all seemed lost---her grief overwhelming. And now, suddenly all turned around with **the sound of her name from His lips** and the **glimpse into His loving eyes**. No one has ever experienced a moment quite like that. It's hers alone to remember and cherish forever.

While her head was still spinning and her heart leaping for joy, Her Lord, directed her priorities back to His own.

*[17] Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: **but go to my brethren**, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and **your Father**; and to my God, and **your God**.*

She'll have eternity to worship Him. Her mission for the moment was to make practical use of her devotion to Him and tell the disciples He is risen from the dead.

Mary dutifully, obeyed secure in the knowledge she would see Him again. Parting is such sweet sorrow.

*[18] Mary Magdalene came and **told the disciples** that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.*

Mark 16 fills in a few details about why she came back to the tomb:

*[1] And when the sabbath was past, **Mary Magdalene**, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had **bought sweet spices**, that **they might come and anoint him**.*

*[2] And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre **at the rising of the sun**.*

Matthew 28 gives the following account:

[1] In the end of the sabbath, **as it began to dawn** toward the first day of the week, came **Mary Magdalene** and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

[2] And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

[3] His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

[4] And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

[5] And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

Then come some of the most glorious words ever spoken.

[6] **He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.**

Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

[7] And **go quickly, and tell his disciples** that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

[8] And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and **great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.**

[9] And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and **worshipped him.**

When we see Him, we will do nothing less.

,[10] Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: **go tell my brethren** that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

This time **two** Marys gazed upon Him and heard Him speak to them. Mary Magdalene was not dreaming.

Finally, Luke 24 adds the following sad details:

[10] It was **Mary Magdalene**, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

[11] And **their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.**

After all, both Peter and John had just inspected the tomb themselves. While the body was gone, they saw neither angels nor the risen Lord. How frustrating it must have been for these women to have delivered such joyous news and been met with such callous unbelief. What Mary witnessed was the **most important event** in all of history.

While Mary Magdalene clearly is the star witness to the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Bible says to settle a matter by the testimony of two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15). Were there other reliable witnesses to this momentous event? Here's what the Apostle Peter said.

I Peter 1

[18] Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, ...;

[19] But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

[20] **Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,**

*[21] Who by him do believe in God, **that raised him up from the dead**, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.*

The Apostle John also attested to the resurrection of Christ in:

John 21

*[14] This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, **after that he was risen from the dead**.*

Then of course we have Jesus Himself. In John 2:18-22, he said destroy (kill) this temple (His body), and He will raise it up in three days. If He did not rise from the dead, Jesus Himself would be a liar.

Jesus Christ has risen to take His place at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2)

Next, let's look at the resurrection chapter written by the Apostle Paul.

I Corinthians 15 (Apostle Paul)

*[3] For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that*

*Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;*

*[4] And that*

*he was buried, and that*

***he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:***

That's the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1) in a nutshell – the clear definition of the good news of Jesus Christ. And as part of the gospel, the Apostle Paul testified to His resurrection.

*[5] And that*

***he was seen***

*of Cephas [that is, Peter],  
then of the twelve:*

*[6] After that,*

*he was seen of **above five hundred brethren at once**; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep [that is they died].*

*[7] After that,*

*he was seen of James;*

*then of*

*all the apostles.*

*[8] And last of all*

*he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

The apostle Paul builds his case on **eye witnesses**. It's also interesting to note here that the fact that Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried, was **known, established, and not even in dispute**.

The Apostle Paul clearly states the fact that Jesus rose from the dead.

*[20]*

***But now is Christ risen from the dead,***

This is a clear fact that he had personally witnessed.

*and become **the first fruits** of them that slept.*

Jesus is the first and only one to rise bodily from the dead into His glorified body. All others who have died still await the resurrection of their body.

*[21] For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*

*[22] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

*[23] But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*

When will those who know Him receive their resurrected body? The verse we just read said **when He comes again**. This is the coming event called *the rapture*. The case is closed. **As** Mary Magdalene witnessed and the Apostle Paul so methodically laid out, the resurrection **is** the most significant event of history.

### **Application**

What is the most important event in **your** life?

Jesus said:

Matthew 16

*[36] For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

*[37] Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

We see people all around us today who have no hope of new life in Christ. To them, this life is all there is. They desperately hang on to life and obsess over every new potential disease, test, and medical procedure. They're willing to spend every last dime (especially if it's *your* dime) to prolong their life. Yet when that last dime **is** spent and that last breath **is** breathed, they too must stand and give an account before a Holy God.

Are you prepared for that moment? Have you made your peace with the Creator? If not, God has provided the way:

Romans 10

*[9] That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that **God hath raised him from the dead**, thou shalt be saved.*

*[10] For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

God raised Jesus Christ from the dead to offer you the gift of eternal life. What will **you do** with the most significant event in history?

### **Benediction**

*Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory **with exceeding joy**, To the only wise God **our Saviour**, be **glory** and **majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.** (Jude 24-25)*

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